



H.Res. 482 - Expressing support for the new power-sharing government in Northern Ireland.

H.Res. 482 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Elton Gallegly (R-CA) on June 6, 2007. The bill was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs and was considered under unanimous consent.

H.Res. 482 is expected to be considered on the floor on July 11, 2007.

Summary

H.Res. 482 resolves that:

- The United States stands strongly in support of the new power-sharing government in Northern Ireland;
- Political leaders of Northern Ireland, Prime Minister Tony Blair, and Taoiseach Bertie Ahern should be commended for acting in the best interest of the people of Northern Ireland by forming the new power-sharing government;
- This day (May 8, 2007) will be remembered as an historic day and an important milestone in cementing peace and unity for Northern Ireland and a shining example for nations around the world plagued by internal conflict and violence; and
- The United States stands ready to support this new government and to work with the people of Northern Ireland as they achieve their goal of lasting peace for those who reside in Northern Ireland.

Background

The Good Friday Agreement was signed on April 10, 1998, in Belfast, was endorsed in a referendum by the overwhelming majority of people in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland and, set forth a blueprint for lasting peace in Northern Ireland. Almost 10 years later on May 8, 2007, leaders from the major political parties in Northern Ireland took office as part of an agreement to share power in accordance with the democratic mandate of the Good Friday Agreement.

Ian Paisley, Democratic Unionist leader, and Martin McGuinness became Northern Ireland's first minister and deputy first minister, marking the beginning of a new era of power-sharing. The Democratic Unionist leader, and Mr. McGuinness, the Sinn Fein negotiator, have put aside decades of conflict and moved toward historic reconciliation and unity in Northern Ireland.

On May 8, 2007, Dr. Paisley declared, "I believe that Northern Ireland has come to a time of peace, a time when hate will no longer rule."

Additionally, Mr. McGuinness declared this new government to be "a fundamental change of approach, with parties moving forward together to build a better future for the people that we represent."

Communities have worked together in a spirit of cooperation and mutual respect to solve the problems of concern to all the people of Northern Ireland, including the decision by all the major political parties to join the Northern Ireland Police Board and support the Police Service of Northern Ireland.

Cost

This legislation has not been scored by CBO.

Staff Contact

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